

What is Claimed:

1. A method of communicating, comprising:
a client device generating a data message comprising textual content using;
the client device transmitting the data message to a mobile device;
the mobile device receiving the transmitted data message and displaying the textual content;
the mobile device causing a voice reply to the received data message to be generated by speaking into the mobile device using a transmit action.
2. The method of claim 1, further comprising the mobile device transmitting a spoken reply in response to the transmit action.
3. The method of claim 2, further comprising a message authority receiving the transmitted spoken reply, and storing the received spoken reply as a voice message.
4. The method of claim 3, further comprising the message authority generating a data message indicating that a voice message is pending sending the data message to the client device.

5. The method of claim 4, further comprising the message authority attaching the stored voice message or a copy of the stored voice message to the data message sent to the client device.

6. The method of claim 4, further comprising the client device receiving the data message and retrieving the voice message or a copy of the stored voice message.

7. The method of claim 6, wherein receiving the data message comprises the client device using an email client to receive the data message.

8. The method of claim 6, wherein retrieving the voice message comprises the client device receiving the data message and retrieving an attached voice message.

9. The method of claim 6, wherein retrieving the voice message comprises the client device accessing the message authority to retrieve a copy of the voice message.

10. The method of claim 1, wherein generating and transmitting the data message comprising using an email client to generate and transmit the data message.

11. The method of claim 10, wherein the data message is an email message.

12. The method of claim 1, wherein generating and transmitting the data message comprising using a web browser interfacing with a web-based application to generate and transmit the data message.

13. The method of claim 1, wherein the data message is an SMS message.

14. The method of claim 1, wherein the transmit action comprises pressing and holding a button on the mobile device while speaking the reply.

15. The method of claim 1, wherein the transmit action comprises pressing and releasing a button on the mobile device before speaking, and pressing and releasing a button on the mobile device when finished speaking.

16. The method of claim 1, wherein the data message comprises an identifier, and wherein the method further comprises using the identifier to look up an email address.

17. The method of claim 16, wherein generating the voice reply comprises, the mobile device converting the spoken reply to a digital format, automatically generating an email message, attaching the digitally formatted voice reply to the email message, and transmitting the email message and attachment to the email address.

18. The method of claim 1, wherein generating the voice reply comprises initiating a native voice call from the mobile device to an intermediate address associated with a message authority, and transmitting the spoken reply to the message authority via the native voice call.

19. The method of claim 18, wherein the transmitted spoken reply is associated with an identifier that identifies the mobile device, and wherein the method further comprises, the message authority, determining a destination address for the voice reply by reference to the combination of the mobile device identifier and the intermediate address.

20. The method of claim 19, further comprising the message authority converting the received spoken reply to a voice message and relaying the voice message to the determined destination address.

21. The method of claim 19, further comprising associating both the mobile device identifier and the intermediate address with a communication pathway associated with the destination address.

22. A communication device, comprising:

a receiver configured to receive a data message, the data message comprising an identifier that can be used to determine a reply path associated with the received data message;

a processor configured to parse the data message, extract the identifier, and determine the reply path from the identifier;

a transmit action mechanism, the communication device configured to receive a spoken reply to the data message in response to the initiation of a transmit action using the transmit action mechanism.

23. The communication device of claim 22, further comprising:

a message generator configured to accept the spoken reply upon initiation of a transmit action, store the spoken reply as a voice message, create a data message, and attaché the stored voice message or a copy of the stored voice message to the data message; and

a transmitter configured to transmit the data message and attached voice message via the determined reply path.

24. The communication device of claim 23, wherein the message generator comprises a microphone and associated audio hardware configured to receive the spoken response from a user and convert the spoken response into a voice message for transmission using the transmitter.

25. The communication device of claim 23, wherein the transmitter is a wireless transmitter configured to transmit a wireless message.

26. The communication device of claim 22, further comprising a display, wherein the data message further comprises textual content, and wherein the display is configured to display the textual content.

27. The communication device of claim 22, wherein the receiver is a wireless receiver configured to receive a wireless data message.

28. The communication device of claim 27, wherein the wireless data message comprises a two-way text message.

29. The communication device of claim 27, wherein the wireless data message comprises a SMS message.

30. The communication device of claim 27, wherein the wireless data message comprises an email message.

31. The communication device of claim 22, wherein the transmit action input is a push-to-talk input.

32. The communication device of claim 22, wherein the processor is further configured to parse the received data message and extract the identifier from the parsed data message.

33. The communication device of claim 22, further comprising a memory coupled with the processor, and wherein determining the reply path associated with the data message comprises accessing the memory and looking up the reply path using the identifier.

34. The communication device of claim 22, wherein the reply path determined from the identifier is an intermediate reply path associated with a message authority, and wherein determining a final reply path associated with the received data message comprises transmitting the spoken reply via the intermediate reply path to the message authority.

35. The communication device of claim 34, wherein the processor is further configured to associate an identifier that can be used to identify a user of the communication device with the transmitted spoken reply.

36. The communication device of claim 35, wherein the message authority is further configured to use the associated identifier and the intermediate reply path to determine a final reply path.

37. A communication system; comprising:

a client device configured to generate and transmit a data message;

a message authority configured to receive the data message and forward the data message, the forwarded data message comprising an identifier that can be used to determine the reply path to the communication device; and

a communication device, comprising:

a receiver configured to receive the forwarded data message,

a processor configured to parse the received data message, extract the identifier from the parsed data message, and determine the reply path from the extracted identifier,

a transmit action mechanism, the communication device configured to receive a spoken reply to the data message in response to the initiation of a transmit action using the transmit action mechanism.

38. The communication system of claim 37, wherein the communication device further comprises:

a message generator configured to accept the spoken reply upon initiation of a transmit action, store the spoken reply as a voice message, create a data message, and attaché the stored voice message or a copy of the stored voice message to the data message; and

a transmitter configured to transmit the data message and attached voice message via the determined reply path.

39. The communication system of claim 38, wherein the message generator comprises a microphone and associated audio hardware configured to receive the spoken response from a user and convert the spoken response into a voice message for transmission using the transmitter.

40. The communication system of claim 39, wherein the transmitter is a wireless transmitter configured to transmit a wireless message.

41. The communication system of claim 40, wherein the communication device further comprises a transmitter configured to transmit the spoken reply via a communication network, and wherein the message authority comprises a collector interfaced with the communication network, the collector configured to receive the transmitted spoken reply via the communication network and to forward the spoken reply.

42. The communication system of claim 41, wherein the collector is further configured to send an acknowledgment to the communication device to indicate proper receipt of the spoken reply.

43. The communication system of claim 42, wherein the response comprises audible indicators.

44. The communication system of claim 43, wherein the audible indicators comprise one or more audible beeps.

45. The communication system of claim 41, wherein the collector comprises a plurality of receiving devices, wherein each of the plurality of receiving devices is associated with an address.

46. The communication system of claim 45, wherein the received spoken reply comprises an identifier that can be used to identify an address associated with one of the plurality of receiving devices, and wherein the identified receiving device is used to receive the spoken reply.

47. The communication system of claim 41, wherein the collector is configured to interface with an electronic gateway via an IP network.

48. The communication system of claim 47, wherein the received spoken reply comprises an identifier that can be used to identify an address associated with the collector, and wherein the electronic gateway is configured to recognize determine that the address is associated with the collector using the identifier and to forward the spoken reply to the collector via the IP network.

49. The communication system of claim 41, wherein the collector further comprises a processor configured to reformat the received spoken reply and forward the reformatted spoken reply.

50. The communication device of claim 49, wherein the message authority further comprises a data center configured to receive the reformatted spoken reply and to process and store the reformatted spoken reply as a voice message.

51. The communication system of claim 50, wherein the data center comprises a database configured to store information related to a user of the communication device and a file storage configured to store messages, and wherein storing the reformatted spoken reply as a voice message comprises associating the voice message with the information associated with the user and storing the voice message in the file storage.

52. The communication system of claim 51, wherein the spoken reply comprises an identifier that identifies the communication device, and wherein processing the reformatted spoken reply comprises determining an identity of the user of the communication device using the identifier and information stored in the database.

53. The communication system of claim 52, wherein the spoken reply further comprises a receive address associated with the

collector, and wherein processing the reformatted spoken reply further comprises determining an address associated with the client device using the communication device identifier, the receive address, and information stored in the database.

54. The communication system of claim 50, wherein the message authority further comprises a message server configured to forward the stored voice message to the client device.

55. The communication system of claim 54, wherein forwarding the voice message to the client device comprises sending a notification to the client device of a pending message and receiving a request from the client device for a copy of the voice message.

56. The communication system of claim 54, wherein the message server comprises a web server, and wherein forwarding the voice message comprises generating a web page, retrieving a copy of the voice message from the data center, and delivering a copy of the voice message via the web page.

57. The communication system of claim 56, wherein the web page enables a user of the client device to access and play the voice message.

58. The communication system of claim 54, wherein the message server further comprises a communication server interfaced

with a communication network, the communication server configured to receive the data message from the client device via the communication network.

59. The communication system of claim 58, wherein the communication server is an email server, and wherein the received data message is an email message.

60. The communication system of claim 37, wherein the client device comprises a message generator interfaced with a communication network, the message generator configured to generate the data message and forward it to the message authority via the communication network.

61. The communication system of claim 60, wherein the message generator included in the client device is an email client configured to generate email data messages.

62. The communication system of claim 37, wherein the receiver is a wireless receiver configured to receive a wireless data message.

63. The communication system of claim 62, wherein the wireless data message comprises a two-way text message.

64. The communication system of claim 62, wherein the wireless data message comprises a SMS message.

65. The communication system of claim 62, wherein the wireless data message comprises an email message.

66. The communication system of claim 37, wherein the transmit action input is a push-to-talk input.

67. The communication system of claim 37, wherein determining the reply path comprises determining the reply path from the identifier.

68. The communication system of claim 37, wherein the communication device further comprises a memory coupled with the processor, and wherein determining the reply path comprises accessing the memory and looking up the reply path using the identifier.

69. The communication device of claim 37, wherein the reply path determined from the identifier is an intermediate reply path, and wherein determining a final reply path comprises associating an identifier that can be used to identify the user of the communication device with the spoken reply and transmitting the spoken reply to the message authority via the intermediate reply path.

70. The communication system of claim 69, wherein the message authority is configured to receive the spoken reply and associated identifier and to use compound indexing based on the identifier and the intermediate reply path to look up the final reply path in a table or plurality of tables.

71. The communication system of claim 37, wherein the data message further comprises textual information, and wherein the second communication device further comprises a display configured to display the textual information.

72. A method for communicating, comprising:
receiving a data message comprising an identifier that can be used to determine a reply path; and
in response to a transmit action, causing a voice reply to the data message to be created.

73. The method of claim 72, wherein the transmit action comprises depressing a button and releasing the button.

74. The method of claim 72, wherein the reply path associated with the message is determined from the identifier in response to the transmit action.

75. The method of claim 74, wherein determining the reply path comprises determining the reply path from the identifier.

76. The method of claim 74, wherein determining the reply path comprises looking up the reply path using the identifier.

77. The method of claim 74, wherein determining the reply path comprises forwarding a spoken reply with an identifier that can be used to identify a user of a device sending the spoken reply and an intermediate reply path to a message authority configured to use compound indexing based on the identifier and the intermediate reply path to look up the reply path in a table or plurality of tables.

78. The method of claim 72, wherein the received data message comprises an email message.

79. The method of claim 72, wherein the received data message comprises a two-way text message.

80. The method of claim 72, wherein the received data message comprises a SMS message.

81. The method of claim 72, wherein causing a voice reply to be created comprises receiving a spoken reply, storing the spoken reply as a voice message, and attaching the stored voice message to a data message.

82. The method of claim 81, further comprising transmitting the data message and attached voice message along the reply path.

83. The method of claim 72, wherein causing a voice reply to be created comprises receiving a spoken reply and transmitting the spoken reply to a message authority that is configured to store the spoken reply as a voice message, and attach the stored voice message to a data message.

84. The method of claim 83, further comprising transmitting the data message and attached voice message along the reply path.

85. A communication device, comprising:
a receiver configured to receive a data message comprising an identifier that can be used to determine a reply path; and
a transmit action input, the communication device configured to cause a voice reply to the data message to be created in response to a transmit action initiated using the transmit action input.

86. The communication device of claim 85, wherein the receiver is a wireless receiver configured to receive a wireless data message.

87. The communication device of claim 86, wherein the wireless data message comprises a two-way text message.

88. The communication device of claim 86, wherein the wireless data message comprises a SMS message.

89. The communication device of claim 86, wherein the wireless data message comprises an email message.

90. The communication device of claim 85, wherein the transmit action input is a push-to-talk input.

91. The communication device of claim 85, further comprising a processor, the processor configured to determine, in response to the initiation of the transmit action, the reply path from the identifier included in the received data message.

92. The communication device of claim 91, wherein determining the reply path comprises determining the reply path from the identifier.

93. The communication device of claim 91, further comprising a memory coupled with the processor, and wherein determining the reply path comprises accessing the memory and looking up the reply path using the identifier.

94. The communication device of claim 85, wherein causing a recorded voice reply to be created and sent comprises receiving a spoken reply, storing the spoken reply as a voice message, and attaching the stored voice message to a data message.

95. The communication device of claim 94, further comprising a transmitter configured to transmit the data message and attached voice message along the reply path.

96. The communication device of claim 95, wherein the transmitter is a wireless transmitter.

97. The communication device of claim 85, further comprising a transmitter, and wherein causing a voice reply to be created comprises receiving a spoken reply and transmitting the spoken reply to a message authority that is configured to store the spoken reply as a voice message, attach the stored voice message to a data message and transmit the data message and attached voice message along the reply path.

98. The communication device of claim 97, wherein the transmitter is a wireless transmitter.

99. A communication system, comprising:
a client device configured to generate and transmit a data message;

a message authority configured to receive the data message and forward the data message, the forwarded data message comprising an identifier that identifies a reply path associated with the communication device; and

a communication device, comprising:

a receiver configured to receive a data message comprising an identifier that can be used to determine a reply path; and

a transmit action input, the second communication device configured to cause a voice reply to the data message to be created in response to a transmit action initiated using the transmit action input.

100. The communication system of claim 99, wherein causing a recorded voice reply to be created comprises receiving a spoken reply, storing the spoken reply as a voice message, and attaching the stored voice message to a data message.

101. The communication system of claim 100, wherein the communication device further comprises a transmitter configured to transmit the data message and attached voice message along the reply path.

102. The communication system of claim 101, wherein the transmitter is a wireless transmitter.

103. The method of claim 99, wherein the communication device further comprises a transmitter, and wherein causing a voice reply to be created and sent comprises receiving a spoken reply and transmitting the spoken reply to the message authority.

104. The communication system of claim 103, wherein the message authority is further configured to store the spoken reply as a voice message, attach the stored voice message to a data message, and transmit the data message and attached voice message along the reply path.

105. The communication device of claim 103, wherein the transmitter is a wireless transmitter.

106. The communication system of claim 103, wherein the transmitter is configured to transmit the spoken reply over a communication network, and wherein the message authority comprises a collector interfaced with the communication network, the collector configured to receive the transmitted spoken reply.

107. The communication device of claim 106, wherein the collector is further configured to send an acknowledgment to the communication device to indicate proper receipt of the response.

108. The communication system of claim 107, wherein the response comprises audible indicators.

109. The communication device of claim 108, wherein the audible indicators comprise three audible beeps.

110. The communication device of 106, wherein the collector further comprises a processor configured to reformat the received spoken reply and forward the reformatted spoken reply.

111. The communication device of claim 110, wherein the message authority further comprises a data center configured to receive the reformatted spoken reply and to process and store the reformatted spoken reply as a voice message.

112. The communication system of claim 111, wherein the data center comprises a database configured to store information related to a user of the communication device and a file storage configured to store messages, and wherein storing the reformatted spoken reply as voice message comprises associating the voice message with the information associated with the user and storing the voice message in the file storage.

113. The communication system of claim 112, wherein the reformatted spoken reply comprises an identifier that identifies the communication device, and wherein processing the reformatted spoken reply comprises determining an identity of the user of the

communication device using the identifier and information stored in the database.

114. The communication system of claim 113, wherein the reformatted spoken reply further comprises a receive address associated with the collector, and wherein processing the reformatted spoken reply further comprises determining the reply path using the identifier, the receive address, and information stored in the database.

115. The communication system of claim 114, wherein the collector comprises a plurality of receiving devices, wherein each of the plurality of receiving devices is associated with an address.

116. The communication system of claim 114, wherein the receive address is one of a plurality of receive addresses associated with the collector.

117. The communication system of claim 111, wherein the message authority further comprises a message server configured to forward the stored voice message to the client device.

118. The communication system of claim 117, wherein forwarding the voice message to the client device comprises sending a notification to the client device of a pending voice message and receiving a request from the client device for a copy of the voice message.

119. The communication system of claim 118, wherein the message server comprises a web server, and wherein forwarding the voice message comprises generating a web page, retrieving a copy of the voice message from the data center, and delivering a copy of the voice message via the web page.

120. The communication system of claim 117, wherein the message server further comprises a communication server interfaced with a communication network, the communication server configured to receive the data message from the client device via the communication network.

121. The communication system of claim 120, wherein the communication server is an email server, and wherein the received data message is an email message.

122. The communication system of claim 99, wherein the client device comprises a message generator interfaced with a communication network, the message generator configured to generate the data message and forward it to the message authority via the communication network.

123. The communication system of claim 122, wherein the message generator included in the client device is an email client configured to generate email data messages.

124. The communication system of claim 123, wherein the message authority is further configured to forward the voice reply to the client device, and wherein the client device comprises a client application configured to enable the client device to receive the voice reply.

125. The communication system of claim 124, wherein the client application is a web browser, and wherein the web browser is configured to receive the voice reply via a web page generated by the message authority.

126. The communication system of claim 99, wherein the receiver is a wireless receiver configured to receive a wireless data message.

127. The communication system of claim 126, wherein the wireless data message comprises a two-way text message.

128. The communication system of claim 126, wherein the wireless data message comprises a SMS message.

129. The communication system of claim 126, wherein the wireless data message comprises an email message.

130. The communication system of claim 99, wherein the single action input is a push-to-talk input.